

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 291 503

PS 017 176

AUTHOR Ford, Phyllis
TITLE Learning through Play: A Guide for Parents of 3-, 4-, or 5-Year-Olds. Revised.
INSTITUTION South Carolina State Dept. of Education, Columbia.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 35p.; For the 1983 edition, see ED 256 486.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Objectives; *Games; Guidelines; *Kindergarten; *Learning Activities; Parent Role; *Preschool Children; Resource Materials; *School Readiness; State Curriculum Guides
IDENTIFIERS *South Carolina

ABSTRACT

This activity guidebook for parents, which updates a 1983 version, presents numerous games and activities that parents and their 3- to 5-year-old children can enjoy together. Each activity is intended to facilitate acquisition of one of 18 kindergarten skills, including: (1) coordinating arms, legs, and eyes; (2) coordinating hands, fingers, and eyes; (3) remembering what has been seen; (4) knowing when things look the same or different; (5) remembering what has been heard; (6) knowing when sounds are the same or different; (7) talking about activities, knowledge, and opinions; (8) listening to what others say; (9) showing interest in words and books; (10) grouping things; (11) comparing things; (12) putting words and things in order; (13) beginning to understand what numbers mean; (14) understanding stories; (15) expressing feelings appropriately; (16) showing pride in self; (17) looking forward to going to school; and (18) getting along well with other children and adults. Descriptions of suggested activities are preceded by instructions to parents about how to model the desired behaviors and then let the child try them. Concluding materials describe activities children can do with parents' help and offer recipes for materials. Parents are urged to mix muscle, mental, and behavioral games; avoid forcing children to do any of the activities; and allow the child to have fun learning through playing. (RH)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

PS 012176

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S.C. State
Dept. of Educ.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**KINDERGARTEN OBJECTIVES
ADOPTED BY THE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
JUNE 8, 1979**

1. The student performs tasks involving gross motor skills.
2. The student performs tasks involving fine motor skills.
3. The student remembers visual stimuli.
4. The student determines likenesses and differences in visual stimuli.
5. The student remembers auditory stimuli.
6. The student determines likenesses and differences in auditory stimuli.
7. The student communicates with others by using expressive language.
8. The student is receptive of language in communicating with others.
9. The student expresses an interest in language.
10. The student classifies stimuli on the basis of one or more attribute(s).
11. The student compares stimuli on the basis of one or more attribute(s).
12. The student sequences stimuli on the basis of one or more attribute(s).
13. The student begins to understand the concept of conservation of number.
14. The student interprets and infers on the basis of oral or illustrative selections.
15. The student controls emotions and expresses them in a socially acceptable manner.
16. The student displays a positive attitude toward self.
17. The student displays a positive attitude toward school.
18. The student interacts with others in a socially acceptable manner.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF
3-, 4-, or 5-YEAR-OLDS

REVISED 1987

Basic Skills Section
Lane Trantham, Chief Supervisor

Office of General Education
Joel Taylor, Director

South Carolina Department of Education
Columbia, South Carolina
Charlie G. Williams, State Superintendent

An Equal Opportunity Employer

FOREWORD

Learning is an essential part of every child's life. Play and exploration are natural parts of children's need to learn and to satisfy their curiosity about the world around them. While playing, children develop abilities and ideas which are fundamental to all future learning. Time for play and appropriate play materials enable each child to learn more.

Each of us has a responsibility for enhancing the development of young children. This booklet was written for parents and other care givers of young children three to five years of age. It offers activity ideas which are appropriate for three-, four- and five-year old children and which are related to eighteen state kindergarten objectives adopted by the State Board of Education.

Learning Through Play is dedicated to the young children of our state with the hope that the book will serve as a source for educational and stimulating play environments.

Charlie G. Williams
State Superintendent of Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.....	1
Skills and Activities	
1. Coordinates arms, legs, and eyes.....	2
2. Coordinates hands, fingers, and eyes	3
3. Remembers what he sees	4
4. Knows when things look the same or different	5
5. Remembers what he hears	7
6. Knows when sounds are the same or different	8
7. Talks about what he does, what he knows, and what he thinks	9
8. Listens to what others say	11
9. Shows interest in words and books	12
10. Groups things	13
11. Compares things	15
12. Puts words and things in order	17
13. Begins to understand what numbers mean	18
14. Understands stories	19
15. Expresses feelings appropriately	21
16. Shows pride in self	22
17. Looks forward to going to school	24
18. Gets along well with other children and adults	25
Things That Your Child Can Do with Your Help.....	26
Recipes for Materials	27
This Is Not the End	28

PLEASE READ THIS FIRST

The years 3, 4, and 5 are most important for children to learn and develop good habits.

You are your child's first teacher—and the most important one.

When children are 3, 4, or 5 years old, they have already learned a lot. They want to learn how to do new things to help you and to please you. They are proud to say, "I can do it myself!"

There is no "magic age" at which every child learns to do things. Each child is a special little person—different from brothers, sisters, and other children the same age.

A child 3, 4, or 5 years old learns best by: doing things; playing; listening; talking; watching; imitating you, other adults, and other children.

What This Book Is

The games and activities in this book are some things which you and your child can enjoy together. You're probably doing many of them already.

At the top of each section is one important skill which children can begin to learn before they go to kindergarten or first grade.

These 18 skills are based on the 18 objectives approved by the State Board of Education for kindergarten. The 18 objectives are listed inside the front cover.

Children 3, 4, and 5 can get a good start at home before going to school—but only if you spend some time with

them. Help them initiate activities rather than direct them and they will truly enjoy doing.

What This Book Is Not

The activities in this book are NOT tests for your child to "pass" or "fail." They are **NOT** meant for "playing school" at home. They don't cover all the answers . . . or all the questions about growing children.

How To Use This Book

Don't do all the things on one page at one time. Mix up **Muscle** games on pages 2-4 with **Mental** games on pages 4-20 and **Behavior** activities on pages 21-26. A child's body, mind, and feelings all work together.

When you try one activity, you'll see if it works with your child. If it doesn't, **STOP** and try something else. Don't **PUSH** your little boy or girl to do everything in this book. Many children are not ready to do some things yet. That's natural. Don't worry about it.

The **MAIN IDEA** is that your child should have **FUN** learning through playing. Play is how children work . . . and learn.

COORDINATES ARMS, LEGS, AND EYES

Encourage your child to use arm and leg muscles and to use his eyes to avoid dangers and to judge distances. Children feel good about themselves when they use their bodies well. Coordination is important.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Run and gallop.

March and dance to music.

Walk on tiptoes.

Walk backwards and sideways.

Ride a tricycle.

Kick a ball.

Roll, throw, bounce, and catch a large ball. Then use a smaller ball.

Rake leaves and pick up sticks in the yard.

Jump up and down in a circle on the ground.

Bowl, using plastic drink bottles and a 6-inch ball.

Jump from something 5 inches high, landing on both feet. Later, jump from higher places.

Walk on cracks in the sidewalk and jump over a small grate.

Climb a small tree or fence.

Skip (step, hop with one foot; then step, hop with other foot).

Hit a big plastic ball back and forth to someone else.

Walk on a straight line, zigzag line, and circle.

Wind yarn or string into a ball.

Crawl through big cardboard boxes with open ends that form a tunnel.



Throw paper balls into a box and count how many balls go in.

COORDINATES HANDS, FINGERS, AND EYES

Encourage your child to use hand and finger muscles. Using finger muscles to scribble is how your child begins to learn to write. If your child uses his left hand, it's all right. Many people are left-handed.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Screw and unscrew lids on jars.

Button shirts, blouses, sweaters and coats.

Lace shoes and tie shoelaces.

Zip jacket and pants.

Work simple puzzles.

Draw pictures with crayons.

Cut paper with small scissors.

Put stamps on envelopes in top right-hand corner.

Put trading stamps into a stamp book after wetting stamps with a sponge or wet rag.

Hammer nails into soft wood, after you have pounded them partway down.

Draw pictures with chalk on the sidewalk and then wash the pictures off.

Cut and fold paper plates and paper bags into shapes and strips.

Sew two buttons on an old necktie to make eyes for a "snake."

Make shapes on sandpaper with yarn or string.



Paint pictures with liquid starch or fingerpaints. (Cover the floor with thick newspapers to avoid mess.)

Play with play dough (recipe on page 27).

Divide dough into two parts.

Cut dough with scissors.

Poke holes in dough with fingers, knuckles, fork, or spoon.

Roll dough thin with rolling pin.



Drop raw beans or clothespins into a jar.

Play in sand.

Sift sand.

Pour sand through a paper towel roll.

Make lines and pictures with fingers in the sand.

Make shapes with cans, hands, and square pans.

Play paper games.

Fold paper to make a tent.

Roll paper up and put a rubber band around it.

REMEMBERS WHAT HE SEES

Encourage your child to use his eyes to remember things that he sees. Show your child an object; wait a while, then ask the child to point to, name, or talk about the object.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Recognize his own first name when it is printed.

Point to letters in his name:

- on cereal boxes
- on ice cream cartons
- on milk cartons
- in newspaper ads
- in magazine ads
- in books

Point out places where you turn to get home.

Remember where things are. (When your child loses a shoe, ask him to

remember where the shoe was last seen and to go find it.)

Understand that a picture can represent a real thing. (Cut out a picture of a spoon from a newspaper or magazine ad. Show your child a real spoon to match with the picture of a spoon. Then give your child the picture to find the real thing that matches it. Each time you play this game, add one more picture of something you have in the house so that your child can match the pictures with the real objects.)

Remember an object. (Show your child one book. Take the book away. Put the book with 2 other books. Show your child the 3 books. Let your child pick out the first book.)



Put things back in order. (Show your child a row of 3 different objects. Name each object, then mix them up. Then ask your child to put the 3 objects back in a row in the same order. You can play this game with canned foods with 3 different labels, 1 cup and 2 saucers, 3 different toys, or any group of 3 different things.)

Find things. (Show your child 5-6 nuts in a basket or box. Hide the nuts in the room where the child can see and reach them. Let the child find the nuts and put the nuts back in the basket or box. You can also play "treasure hunt" games with cards, books, toys, valentines, and other things your child likes.)

Play "Slap Jack" with a deck of cards.



Discover what's missing. (Show your child 3 plastic spoons of different colors. Name the colors. Have your child cover his eyes and take away one spoon. Ask what color is missing. You can play this game with a book, a ball, and a spoon or any other 3 different things.)

KNOWS WHEN THINGS LOOK THE SAME OR DIFFERENT

Encourage your child to learn that things look the same or different. Seeing relationships will help your child be a better thinker.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Recognize shapes:

- round ball or apple
- square box or block
- rectangular door or cereal box

Move in different ways:

- walk
- run
- jump
- tiptoe
- hop
- march

See how he or she has grown. (Look at the pictures of the child as a baby or toddler. See how he has grown and changed. Use old clothes now too small to show how his or her legs, arms, and body have grown.)

Play with water.

Fill a container with water. Put in light things (a cork or piece of paper) which float. Put in heavy things (a penny or rock) which sink.

Make a hard sponge soft by wetting it.

Watch ice melt.

Watch water heated in a kettle turn into steam.

Count how many cups it takes to fill a jar full of water.

Blow bubbles in a glass of water with a straw.

Make bubbles in a bowl using an egg beater.

Pour water through a funnel into containers with different size tops.



Match the same color socks from the wash.

Put the right tops back on jars of food used at a meal (peanut butter, jelly, and mayonnaise).



Group things together.

Put all spoons together.

Put all plates together.

Put toys back in the toy box.

Put books on the shelf.

Put crayons in the box.

Match letters. (Cut out one big letter of the alphabet and have your child show you the same letter in a magazine or newspaper ad or on a food label. Use different letters each time. Do the same with numbers from 1 to 10.)

Match labels that are the same and different. (Save labels from cans and boxes. Show your child labels which are the same and different. Then let your child match the labels.)

See how things look different. (Rub a crayon on a piece of paper over leaves from different trees and see how they look. You can play this game with bricks, wood floor, linoleum, cement, coins, and other things.)

REMEMBERS WHAT HE HEARS

Encourage your child to remember things he hears. Tell your child something; wait a while, then ask your child to tell you what you said.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Tell his or her age and birthday.

Learn your address and telephone number.

Say a favorite nursery rhyme.

Sing a short song.

Use the right names of friends and relatives.

Count from 1 to 5 or more.

Answer the phone and recognize a familiar voice.

Say his or her first and last names. Learn parents' first and last names (not just "Mama" or "Daddy").

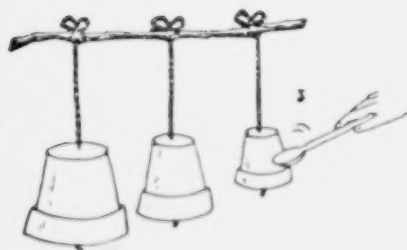
Name the main parts of the body.

Copy a sound pattern.



Tap a rhythm on a pot with a wooden spoon or stick.

Sing and hum a rhythmic song.



Recognize the different sounds made by cars, fire engines, motorcycles, airplanes, ambulances, telephones, alarm clocks, helicopters, vacuum cleaners, trains, chimes.

Make sounds like different animals:

dog
cat
cow
horse
pig
sheep
tiger

Remember a story. (After you have read a short children's story aloud, ask your child to tell you some names of the people or animals in the story . . . what they did . . . and tell you the story.)

Say a short poem.

KNOWS WHEN SOUNDS ARE THE SAME OR DIFFERENT

Encourage your child to learn that things sound the same or different. Knowing this helps your child learn to think, listen, and speak.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Sing or whistle a **high** note and a **low** note. Sing or whistle the **same** note twice.

Say some words which rhyme:

cat and rat
boy and toy
tall and ball

Beat on a pan softly and loudly.

Make different sounds with water.

Put a small amount of water in one glass. Then put a lot of water in another glass. Tap each glass with a spoon. (The glass with less water will make a **higher** sound.)



Use 5 glasses with different levels of water and tap them with a spoon to play easy tunes like "Jingle Bells." "Tune" each glass until it **sounds right**. Sing the tune.

Talk in a loud voice, a medium voice, and a whisper.

Talk about when the radio is played:

loudly (to dance)
medium (to listen)
softly (to sleep)

Recognize sounds outdoors

buses
train
wind
birds
dog barking
a car horn blowing
children shouting
tires screeching
water running
bees buzzing
thunder

Recognize sounds in the bathroom with his eyes closed:

water running in tub
gargling
splashing
brushing teeth
flushing toilet
shower
knock on the door

Find things that sound the same.

Put a little sand in two empty boxes. Put small twigs in two boxes. Put pebbles in two boxes. Let your child shake each box, and match the two boxes that make the same sound.

Name some other things which makes **loud** and **soft** sounds, **high** and **low** sounds, and **far away** and **near** sounds.

Play "I Hear Something." (Let your child cover his eyes and guess what noise you make when you stamp your foot, clap your hands, whistle, tap a spoon on a glass, ring the doorbell, and whisper a word. Take turns closing eyes and guessing sounds.)



TALKS ABOUT WHAT HE DOES, WHAT HE KNOWS, AND WHAT HE THINKS

Encourage your child to talk to you and other people. Give your complete attention to what your child says. Encourage talking in sentences.

Show your child how to do these things. Then help the child:

Play guessing games.

"Guess what we're having for supper."

"Guess what I have in my pocket."

"Guess what's in this paper sack."
(Let your child feel the sack.)

"Guess what smells so good."
(Let your child smell it.)

"Guess what this is used for."

(If your child doesn't get it right, give clues until your child guesses right, make it easier, or tell the child or show him.)

Say a poem he knows.

Talk at meals. (Have meals together as a family without TV or radio at least once a week. Let your child talk to others during the meal.)

Visit places where you, relatives, and friends work.

Show your child things you use in your work.

Answer the child's questions.

Introduce the child to people in your work place.

Tell you how to do something he knows how to do:

How to make a mudpie.

How to put on pajamas.

How to eat a sandwich.

How to brush teeth.

Pretend. Give your child old clothes, towels, a cardboard box, and other things to use to pretend that he or she is a:

- space man
- singer
- baseball player
- dancer
- mama
- daddy
- Superman
- Wonder Woman

Tell you how to do something that he doesn't know about (pretending):

- How a plane flies.
- How to bake a cake.
- How to paint a picture.
- How a car runs.
- How to build a house.

Tell you a story he knows.

Tell what he likes, doesn't like, and why.

- What foods?
- What toys?
- What animals?
- What clothes?

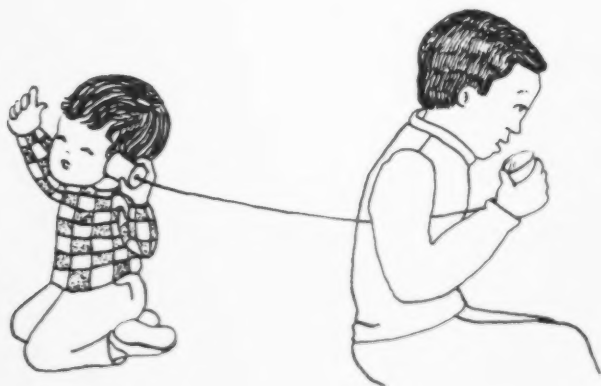
Make three wishes and tell them to you.
(Ask why he wants each wish.)

Talk about a party he attended.

- Who was there?
- What did you eat?
- What games did you play?

Tell you a story about something he did today—as you write down the words. Then read your child's story aloud.

Sing you a song he knows.



Talk on a play telephone. (Make a toy telephone from two paper cups connected with a string tied in the bottom of each cup.)

LISTENS TO WHAT OTHERS SAY

Encourage your child to pay attention to what he hears. Talk to your child and ask questions.

Read a story and ask your child questions about it.

Ask your child to do one thing at a time:

"Please turn out the light."

(Thank the child or say, "That's good," when he does what you ask him to do.)

Ask your child to do two things:

"Please get the cereal and put it in your bowl."

"Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet, please."

Ask your child to repeat what you just said. (If you see that your child did not understand, say it again in different words. Then ask again what you said.)



Tell your child that policemen, firemen, and babysitters keep children safe and that children must do what these people say. Take your child to meet and talk with a policeman.



When riding in a car, tell your child to:
lock the doors
keep arms and head inside the car
wear a seat belt to prevent injuries

Explain what a traffic light means. Then have your child tell you:

what a green light tells you to do
what a yellow light tells you to do
what a red light tells you to do

Tell your child about safety. (When walking close to traffic, hold your child's hand to prevent injuries.)

Listen to children's ETV, TV, and radio programs with your child and talk about each program afterwards.

Listen to music and story records with your child and talk about the records.

Before going to a doctor, dentist, or nurse, tell your child these people help children stay well and that children must do what they say. Go with your child for medical treatments. Afterwards, talk about what the doctor, dentist or nurse said.

SHOWS INTEREST IN WORDS AND BOOKS

Encourage your child to like words and books. Point out that everybody and everything has a name. Read many children's books aloud. Explain that printed words are spoken words which are written down.

Ask your child questions about pictures in a book as you read to your child. (When your child asks what a word means, explain the word.)

Take your child to the public library to get a library card. Then your child can check out magazines, books, and records.

Read your child a story at bedtime or at some other regular time every day.

When you and your child walk or ride outdoors, read advertisements or store signs aloud to your child. Explain what the signs mean:

Gas	Bus Stop
Food	Shoes
Restaurant	Toys

Remember that letting children spend extensive time watching TV wastes valuable time that could be spent in more meaningful, active play.

Play word games like "Lotto" with your child.

When your child asks what signs say:

Read the signs aloud.

Talk about what the signs mean.

Explain signs such as Danger, No Trespassing, Stop, In, Out, Women, Men, Caution, Enter, Exit, Up, Down, Railroad Crossing, Mr. Yuk (poison).



Hold your child in your lap or have your child sit next to you when you read a story. Then your child can see the words and pictures. Ask your child questions about the pictures as you read.

When eating out, read part of the menu aloud with your child. Then ask your child what he wants to eat.

Let your child see you read and enjoy books, magazines, newspapers, letters, cards, etc.

Encourage your child to watch "Sesame Street," "Captain Kangaroo," "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood," and other TV programs for children. Good programs will get your child interested in learning words, numbers, and other important things. Monitor the quality of the program the child views.

GROUPS THINGS

Encourage your child to group objects, foods, and animals by size, color, shape, and use. He may think of other ways to group. Ask your child to tell you about his way of grouping.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Play: "I see something red."

Let the child guess what object in view you've chosen that is red. Then let him pick a different color object for others to guess. This makes a good game in the car, at stores, at home, and outdoors.

Vary this game by guessing things with different shapes and things with different uses, such as:

"I see something round (square)."

"I see something to ride."

"I see something to eat."



Sort things by shape. (Cut out several circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles from paper or cardboard. Let your child sort the cutouts by shape into four different piles.)

Be tidy.

Hang up clothes in the closet with other clothes.

Put socks in drawer with other socks. Put dirty clothes with other dirty clothes.

Put toys away with other toys.

Put books back on the shelf with other books.

Put clean clothes away in the right places.

Cut out pictures of:

cars
trains
skates
planes
bicycles
buses
spaceships
horses
wagons
other ways to travel

(Put the pictures in a wagon or box.)

At the grocery store name different kinds of vegetables, fruits, meats, and desserts.

Point out kinds of things in one room: furniture, toys, books, windows, doors, walls.

Cut out pictures of different clothes from newspapers and magazines to put in a suitcase. (Make a "suitcase" from a dress box with a handle.)

Show you which road signs are shaped round, square, triangular, rectangular.

Play "What's it used for?"

Give your child a pencil and a crayon and ask, "What do you use these for?" (to draw with)

Show your child a sock and a sweater and ask, "What do you use these for?" (to wear)

You can use this game with food (to eat),

toys (to play with), books (to read), pans (to cook with), and other things.

Help you put away groceries in places he or she can reach:

milk and juice in the refrigerator

cans, sugar, cereal, and bread on the shelves where they go

paper napkins in a napkin holder

Let your child decide how he wants a sandwich cut for lunch. Ask "How are all the pieces the same?" (Cut a sandwich into squares, triangles, rectangles with a plastic knife. Cut a sandwich into circles with a biscuit cutter or round can.)



COMPARES THINGS

Encourage your child to learn likenesses and differences in objects, foods, animals, and people. Help your child to know how things are compared with one another. Teach your child words that are used to compare things such as up-down, big-little, top-bottom, cold-hot, tall-short, fat-thin, in-out, near-far, dry-wet, back-front, left-right.

Show your child how to do these things. Let the child try to:

Weigh members of your family on a scale and say:

Who weighs the most.
Who weighs the least.
Who is heavy.
Who is light.

Look at a family picture and say:

Who is tall.
Who is short.
Who is the oldest.
Who is the youngest.

Move to music.

Walk fast and slow.

Wave the right arm, then the left arm.

Slide the right foot, then the left foot.

March into the kitchen and back.

Bounce body up and down.

Swing arms in front of body, then behind back.

Play indoor guessing games:

Tell what's in front of the lamp?

Tell what's under the table and on top of it?

Taste a few grains of sugar and of salt and say which is sweet and which is bitter.

Feel an apple and say if it is smooth or rough. Try a stone, paper, wood.



Measure members of the family with a pencil mark on the closet door and say:

Who is the tallest.
Who is shortest.

Smell what's cooking and tell how it smells.

Begin to learn how time is measured.

What do you do first thing in the morning?

Do we eat breakfast at night?

What do you do at night?

What will you do tomorrow?

What did you do yesterday?

What did you do best today?

Play games in a store:

Which shirt is big? Which is small?

What is on the top shelf? The bottom shelf?

Which pants are light? Which are dark?



Dress and use the words "left" and "right" for arms, legs, hands, and feet as your child puts on socks, shoes, pajamas, shirts, and other clothes. Use the words "back" and "front."

Point out things on a walk.

What's far away and what's near?

What's on the left and what's on the right?

Guess which far-away building you will get to first.

Is the weather hot or cold?

Is the street wet or dry?

Is a rock smooth or rough?

Is the sky dark or light?

Is grass soft or hard?

Do the clouds move or stay still?

What's up high and what's down low?

What grows up into the air and what grows down in the earth?

What's inside the mailbox?

Which car is farther away?

Which house is nearest?

What animals move fast?

PUTS WORDS AND THINGS IN ORDER

Encourage your child to learn to put words and objects in the right order. This helps children learn to think, speak, read, and write more logically.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Talk in sentences and phrases, not just a few words.

Line up three toys in a row. Tell which toy is first, second, and third. Tell which toy is on the left, the middle, the right.

Tell you a short story that you have just read. (Don't worry about details; a child forgets.)

Tell what's happened since he or she was born. Use the family photo album where pictures have been kept in order. Talk about each picture. Tell who's in each picture, what they're doing, and how old the child was then.



Stack boxes.

Talk about what letter comes first in child's name. What comes last? What's in the middle?

Make biscuits.

Measure each cupful and spoonful.

Roll the dough.

Cut dough into circles.

Put the biscuits in the oven.

Bake.

Take biscuits out of the oven.

Let biscuits cool.

Put some butter or jelly on biscuits.

Eat biscuits.



Begin to count things and talk about:

What number comes after 1; before 5.

Sing the A, B, C song.

Put a short, simple comic strip back in order. (Read a 4-section comic strip from a daily newspaper to your child. Then cut the comic strip into the 4 sections. Help your child put the pieces back together in the right order. Then read the story again.)

Plant seeds which bloom at different times of the year, water them, and watch them grow.

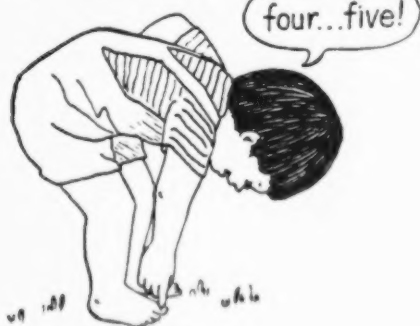


BEGINS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT NUMBERS MEAN

Help your child begin to count things. Then explain that you still have the same number even when you move the objects around.

Show your child how to do these things. Then let the child try to:

Count pennies. (Start with 1, 2, and 3. When your child can count up to 3 easily, add 4; then 5; then 6; then 7; then 8; then 9; then 10.)



Count toes and fingers.

Set the table for meals:

Count how many people will eat.

Count enough spoons, forks, knives, plates, napkins, and glasses for each person's place.

Arrange objects in groups and talk about "more," "less" and "same."

Point out the printed numeral that represents the quantity of a group of objects and say the number.

Trace wooden or plastic numeral shapes which the child can feel with his fingers.

Use a sand timer as a basis for understanding time.

Give each person two cookies.

Count steps.

Jump three times.

Give you four cups for drinks.

Count birthday candles.

Tell you "How many fingers on two hands?"

Play outdoor games counting cars, trees, trucks, horses, cats, dogs, and other things.

Count pennies. (Put 6 pennies on a table. After your child counts the pennies by touching each one, move the pennies into one group of 3, one group of 2, and 1 by itself. Ask your child if you still have the same number of pennies on the table. Watch to see if your child counts the pennies again, or says the same number. Make this a game and use different things such as cards or buttons to count. Use different numbers of things. It is all right for the child to count each before answering.)



Make and discuss a picture calendar of the events in the child's day.

UNDERSTANDS STORIES

Encourage your child to listen to stories and make up stories. Simple books, made-up stories, and picture books help children understand what they see and hear. Children love to hear and see the same story again and again.

Read a story that your child likes several times. Ask questions about the story and the people or animals in the story. Then have your child tell you the story. What were the names of the people and animals? What happened to each one? How did each one feel? How did the story end?

Act out a real story about something your child did today. Pretend that you both are doing what the child did today.

Act out a "make-believe" story.

Let the child act out his (her) story alone or with other children.

When your child finishes a simple puzzle, help him make up a story about the puzzle picture.

Make up a short story together. You say the first part of a sentence, then let your child finish the story.

Parent: "When I woke up this morning, I saw . . ."

Child: "A big yellow tiger."

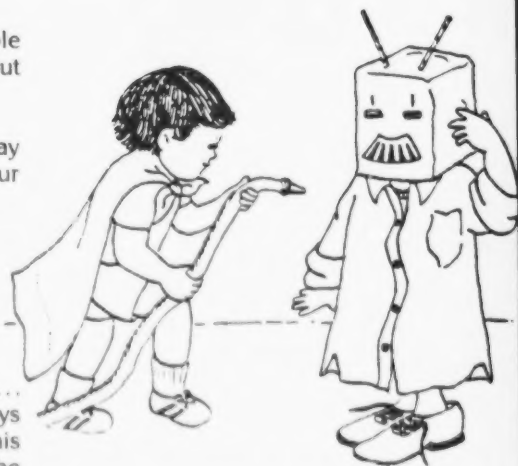
Then let your child start another story . . . and you finish it. (What the child says may surprise you, but accept it.) This game is fun on rainy days inside the house or on trips in the car.

Act out a familiar story with your child (and other children too). Each person takes the part of one person or animal in the story . . . and moves, talks, and makes sounds.

Read a few pages of a new story and let your child "make up" an ending by looking at the pictures. If your child's ending is different from the story's ending, that's good, too.

Point out a picture in a magazine. Ask your child to make up a "pretend" story about the picture. Talk about the picture together and look for details.

Show your child photographs of your family and friends at a birthday party, on Christmas, on Easter, on Halloween, on a trip, and on other special days. Ask what is happening in each picture. Who is in the picture? What are the people wearing? What are the people doing? What "things" are in the picture? Look for little details.



After you and your child watch a children's TV show, talk about what happened. Ask questions. Talk about the story and the people in the story. (Know what a TV or radio program is about before you let your child listen and watch.)



Read the first half of a familiar story. Let your child finish telling the story by "reading" the pictures. Help point out details in the pictures, such as a bird in a tree.

EXPRESSES FEELINGS APPROPRIATELY

Encourage your child to learn to control and to express feelings. Help him to obey rules and to show emotions. Self-control builds up children's confidence and helps them express their feelings in an acceptable way.

Let your child help you:

Make the beds.

Sweep the floor.

Take out the trash.

(Then thank your child for helping.)

Talk about the way your child should act when visiting interesting places:

parks

museums

fairs

libraries

stores

banks

farms

theatres

restaurants

If your child doesn't like a new food the first time it is tried, encourage him to take a few bites. Let your child help you fix simple foods (make jello, break up lettuce for the salad, slice and spread sandwiches with a dull knife, and stir vegetables). Children who help cook or fix food are more eager to eat it.

Give your child some old clothes (shoes, coat, hat); a big cardboard box; a bath towel; and some paper cups and plates to play "make believe." The child can then pretend to be a truck driver, mama, daddy, baby, or another person. Play pretend with your child a few minutes. Ask your child how he or she feels when the baby cries, the mother is tired, the daddy is cross, or the driver has an accident. It is good for children to try to understand what it's like to be an adult.

Give your child jobs that must be done.

"Please brush your teeth and take a bath."

"Please clean up what you spilled."

"Please put away your toys."

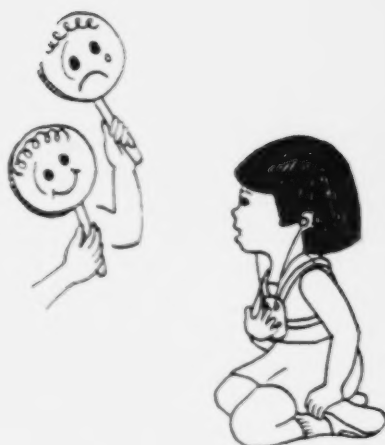
"Please put your clean clothes in the closet."

(First show your child what you expect, offer to help, then praise your child for a job well done.)



When your child is afraid, hold him close and assure him that he is safe. Tell the child that grown-up people are afraid sometimes, too. Fear can be helpful when it makes you more careful about storms, fire, deep water, strange dogs, snakes, bees, and other things that can hurt people.

Make 2 puppets, one with a happy face and one with a sad face. Play with the puppets to act out what made your child happy today. Act out what happened today which made the child angry, sad, or upset. Children can often talk to a puppet, doll, or toy animal about their feelings easier than they can talk to another person.



SHOWS PRIDE IN SELF

Encourage your child to look his best by being neat and clean. Children should feel at ease with their looks and actions at home and at other places. Praise your child when he looks good and does something well. Be a good example for your child.

Help your child plant some flowers or vegetables and then take care of them.

Help your child feed and care for the cat, the dog, or the fish.

Take time to listen to your child when he tries to tell you something.

Take time to look when your child says, "Watch me!"

Let your child "show off" something that he can do for friends and relatives. (But do not let the child "hog" the whole visit.)



Show that you like your child with a hug, a kiss, or a touch, often. Even when you correct him for doing something wrong, tell him you love him but don't like what he did.

Spend some time every day (at least 5-10 minutes) with your child alone for a private and personal chat. At bedtime, tell your child a story or talk together quietly.

Give your child time to dress, brush teeth and hair, take a bath, and use the toilet alone as soon as he or she is able. At first, stand by to help if needed. But let your child do it, even when it takes longer—or when it doesn't get done exactly right at first.

Let your child collect things that are treasures and then show these things to others.

Talk about some things you did when you were a child. (Children love stories about their parents and grandparents when they were little.)

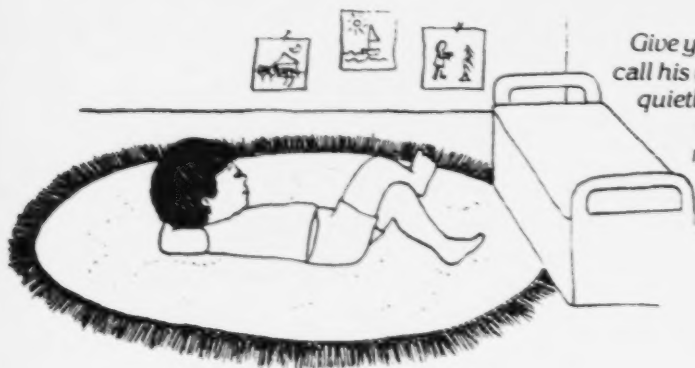
Read a familiar story, but use your child's name instead of the name in the story.

Make up a story about your child and something good he did today.

Treat your child like a friend.



Help your child to finish what he starts: make valentines, dye Easter eggs, make Christmas cards, draw pictures, take a bath, tie shoe laces, care for plants and animals, set the table, take out the trash, bring in groceries, clean up, and pick up toys and put them away. Praise your child when he does something well.



Give your child a place to call his (her) own, to play quietly, to show things that he made, to relax, and to day-dream.

Do not talk about your child in front of him or her.

Use your child's name when you talk to him or her.

LOOKS FORWARD TO GOING TO SCHOOL

Encourage your child to try new things and to look forward to going to new places. Talk about going to school. Children like new things, people and new places where they can enjoy learning.

Children are beginners! Everything is new and interesting to a child! Praise your child when he learns how to do something new. Make the most of your child's curiosity and interest in learning. Encourage your child to do many different things.



Find out where your child will go to school. If your child will be 5 before November 1 of the school year, register him to attend kindergarten. Talk about what children do at school and how your child can make new friends. Talk about teachers in a friendly way. Let your child meet the kindergarten teacher and see the classroom ahead of time. Show your child pictures and read aloud books about children in school and kindergarten. Invite the teacher to your house or visit her house, if possible.

Show how to clean the floor with a cloth or sponge when something is spilled.

Show your child that you have fun and enjoy learning and talking about the new things that you have done and learned together.

Teach your child how to take good care of books.

Wash hands before touching a book.

Turn pages carefully.

Check to see that the book is in a safe place.

Show your child how to take care of toys so that the toys won't get scratched or broken.

Make sure that your child has the immunizations that are required for school entrance. Take your child to the health department or to your family physician for these immunizations.

Take your child to movies, plays, fairs, museums, libraries, parks, pet shops, zoos, the mountains, the ocean, the lake, or the river. Talk about what to expect before you go to a new place. Take your child on nature walks; on trips by train, bus, car, or plane. Visit many different places and people with your child. Talk about the things you do and see and the people you meet. Answer your child's questions. After you leave, talk about what you did.

Show how to put newspapers down when paint, glue, or other messy things are used.

GETS ALONG WELL WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Encourage your child to play with, talk with, and listen to other children and adults. Set a good example for your child in the way you treat other people.

Show your child how to do these things. Then help the child:

Talk with many different people and play with many children.

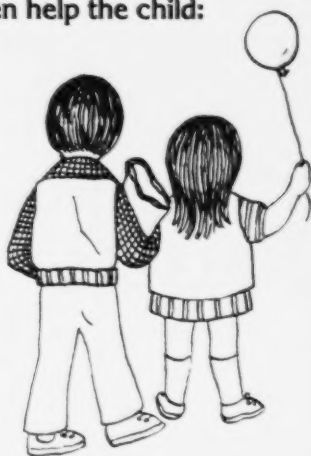
Invite other children to play at your home.

Visit other children and adults in their homes when invited. Before your child goes, talk about how to act with other people and their things.

Practice meeting people; saying "please," "thank you," and other courtesies at home.



Make gifts for your family and friends for Christmas, birthdays, Easter, and other special events.



Learn to share toys, take turns, and be a good winner and good loser.

Treat other children and adults in a friendly way, talk with them, and listen to them and their ideas.

Do nice things for other people.

Take his outgrown clothes and toys to a poor family.

Visit a friend or relative who's sick.

Pick some flowers from his garden for a neighbor.

Draw a picture for a friend, neighbor or relative.

Praise other children and adults for doing something well or doing something nice.

Understand that people are free to feel angry, sad, jealous, and other emotions . . . but not free to act with force. People, use **VOICES**, not fists, and **TALKING**, not hitting, biting, or kicking. (When you see a child in danger of hurting himself or someone else, act quickly to prevent harm. Then explain to the child why this was dangerous and suggest how to solve the problem safely.)

Practice saying:

"May I have a cookie, please?"

"I'm sorry that I broke it."

"I had a good time."

"Thank you for the present."

"Thank you for inviting me."

Greet your friends and relatives, the babysitter, mailman, policeman, store clerk, and other adults. Introduce your child by name and let him talk with these people.

THINGS THAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO WITH YOUR HELP

Stringing Beads:

Take a blunt, plastic yarn needle and an 18" to 24" piece of string, yarn or shoestring. Let your child put raw, large macaroni, or large buttons on the string.

Bells:

Tie dime-store bells on a string or shoestring. Shake the string so that the bells ring.



Playhouse:

Cut out windows and doors from newspaper or cardboard. Tape to the sides of your kitchen table so that the table top becomes the play-house roof. The child may paint the sides of the "house" using finger paints.

Puzzles:

Cut out a simple picture. Paste the picture on cardboard. Cut pictures into 4-5 pieces. Work puzzle, then put pieces into an envelope to use again.

Art Exhibit:

Tack pictures your child has made on a wall, tape them to the refrigerator, or hang them with clothespins on a piece of string. Change the pictures often.

Outdoor Tent:

Stick a broom handle in the ground and cover it with a sheet or blanket or throw the blanket over the clothesline. Hold the tent down with large rocks.

Books:

Make pages out of old paper bags, construction paper, or clear plastic bags stapled together or tied with yarn. Paste pictures from old magazines, greeting cards, photographs, or pictures the child has drawn on the pages or slip them into the clear bags. The picture book can "tell" the child's own story.

Sandbox:

Use four logs, railroad ties, or 2" x 10' boards. Secure the ends together to make a box. Fill the inside with sand. Old spoons, measuring spoons, cans, and plastic glasses can be used by the child for digging in the sand. Cover it tightly when not in use.

RECIPES FOR MATERIALS

Baked Dough:

Combine 2 cups all purpose flour and 1 cup salt in a bowl. Add 1 cup water a little at the time, mixing as you pour. Knead until dough is smooth. Children can then use the dough to model objects. Bake 1 hour at 200°. When cool, objects may be painted.

Cooked Play Dough:

Combine 1 cup flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt, and 2 tablespoons cream of tartar. Add 1 teaspoon oil, 1 cup water, and a few drops of food coloring. Mix thoroughly. Place on stove over medium heat and cook for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly. The mixture is done when it begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. Cool and knead. This dough keeps well when refrigerated in a covered container.

Modeling Clay:

Mix 1 cup of flour, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of salt, and 2 tablespoons of water. Stir until mixed.

Paste:

Add cold water to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour until it is as thick as cream. Then simmer on low heat, stirring constantly for 5 minutes.

Shaker:

Put a few stones or beans in an empty ice-cream carton, oatmeal box, cocoa can, or spice can. Tape the lid closed. Shake the carton.

Tire Swing:

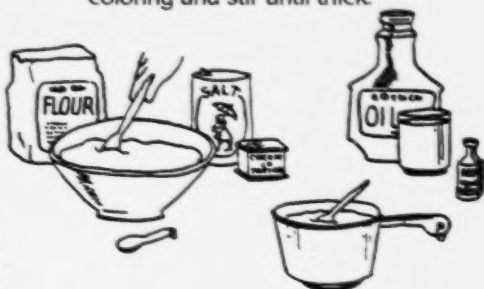
Tie one end of a rope to an old tire and the other end to a strong tree limb. Make sure that the knots will not come untied.

Rope Climb:

Tie knots in a long rope about every six inches. Tie one end of the rope to a strong tree limb.

Finger Paint:

Add 3 tablespoons of cornstarch to 1 cup of boiling water. Add food coloring and stir until thick.



THIS IS NOT THE END . . .

The games and ideas in this book are just some of the ways that you can help your child learn. You can make up many others using materials that you have at home and doing things that you and your child **ENJOY** doing together.

Other places where you can get ideas to try with your child include:

South Carolina elementary schools, which offer free parent education classes for parents of children from birth to six years old (call the school principal of the elementary school near you for details);

Libraries, which have books, magazines, etc. for parents and young children (the librarian can recommend some good ones);

TV and radio programs for children;

Churches, Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., nursery schools, playgrounds, community education programs, and other places in your town.

Spend as much time with your child as you can. These years of childhood go by very fast. Let your child enjoy being a child and have fun using materials from which he can learn. Give your child time to enjoy his childhood.

Your child's future depends a lot on what you do together **NOW**. Helping your child learn is the most important job you have.

Acknowledgments

The Basic Skills Section wishes to thank members of the Educational Data Center production staff for design and typesetting; Phyllis Ford for the original text; Toni Child for editing; Gerry Thomas for the illustrations; and Anita Baker, Rosena McBride and Susan Swick, mothers of preschoolers who gave us good ideas for our first edition of this booklet in 1981. This is our third edition.